

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed from the United States Patent and Trademark Office December 30, 2008, claims 7-14, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as inoperative and lacking utility, and claims 7-14, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. As discussed in the telephonic interview, Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to the claims overcome all outstanding rejections, and Applicants therefore respectfully request removal of the rejections.

Comments regarding the claim set presented herein:

Amendments have been made to claims 7, 11, 17, and 18, as marked in the claim set. Additionally, new claims 19-28 have been added. These new claims correspond with claims 7-14, 17, and 18, with different amendments. Specifically, claims 19-23 correspond to prior claims 7-10 and 18, while claims 24-28 correspond to prior claims 11-14 and 18. Since the new claims provided in the claim set do not show markings corresponding to the changes made from prior claims 7-14, 17, and 19, the new claims have been reproduced below with markings indicating the changes. These are provided to assist the Examiner in examining the new claims and understanding the changes made.

Applicants note that the language added to the new claims finds support in the specification at least at paragraph 0032 (of the published application), which recites that the dermal area of interest exhibits higher conductivity than adjacent dermal areas.

Courtesy Copy of the New Claims Showing Changes from Prior Claims 7-14, 17, and 18

19. (new) A method for obtaining an electrical signal from a patient at the patient's skin, said method comprising:

locating a first dermal area of said patient ~~approximating a meridian~~ exhibiting higher conductivity than adjacent dermal areas;

a user statically contacting, with a probe, said dermal area and allowing said probe to dynamically vary a pressure applied by said probe to said dermal area, said probe comprising:

a stationary element to stabilize said probe against said dermal area;

a probe tip operably connected to a biasing element to apply said pressure to said dermal area;

a detector operably connected to said probe tip to detect an electrical signal at the patient's skin corresponding to said pressure;

a feedback loop connected to said detector to provide a feedback signal containing information with respect to said electrical signal at the patient's skin;

said biasing element connected to said feedback loop to receive said feedback signal and operating to dynamically adjust said pressure in accordance with said feedback signal; and

obtaining, from said probe, an electrical signal at the patient's skin corresponding to said meridian first dermal area.

20. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein said locating a first dermal area further comprises providing a point locator for indicating a dermal location having a substantially greater bioelectric conductance value than a surrounding dermal area, said point locator configured to produce audible signals indicating said location.

21. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein said probe further comprises:

a conductive base; and

an abrasive bristly matrix coupled to a surface area of said conductive base, wherein a plurality of bristles of said abrasive bristly matrix simultaneously contact said dermal area.

22. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein said information comprises a bioelectric conductance value.

23. (new) The method of claim 19, further comprising locating said meridian-first dermal area by:

locating successive dermal areas approximating said meridian-first dermal area;

said user statically contacting said successive dermal areas with said probe;

allowing said probe to dynamically vary a pressure applied by said probe to said successive dermal areas in accordance with said feedback signal; and

determining a dermal location corresponding to said meridian-first dermal area before obtaining said electrical signal corresponding to said meridian-first dermal area.

24. (new) A method for obtaining an electrical signal from a patient at the patient's skin, said method comprising:

measuring relative conductance of a first dermal area of said patient proximate a meridian exhibiting higher conductivity than adjacent dermal areas;

a user statically contacting with a probe the skin and allowing said probe to dynamically

vary a pressure applied by said probe to the skin, said probe comprising:

a stationary element to stabilize said probe against said location;

a probe tip operably connected to a biasing element to apply a pressure to said

location;

a detector operably connected to said probe tip to detect an electrical signal at the patient's skin corresponding to said pressure;

a feedback loop connected to said detector to provide a feedback signal containing information with respect to said electrical signal at the patient's skin; and

said biasing element connected to said feedback loop to receive said feedback

signal and operating to dynamically adjust said pressure in accordance with said feedback signal; and

obtaining, from said probe, an electrical signal at the patient's skin corresponding to said meridian.

25. (new) The method of claim 24, wherein said measuring relative conductance of a first dermal area further comprises:

iteratively measuring a bioelectric conductance value of a surface of said first dermal area;

iteratively comparing a first said bioelectric conductance value corresponding to a first surface location to a second said bioelectric conductance value corresponding to a second surface location;
audibly indicating a dermal location where said second bioelectric conductance value is substantially greater than said first bioelectric conductance value.

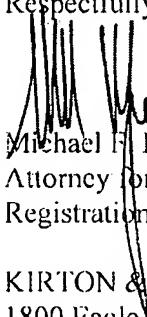
26. (new) The method of claim 24, wherein said probe further comprises:
a conductive base; and
an abrasive bristly matrix coupled to a surface area of said conductive base, wherein a plurality of bristles of said abrasive bristly matrix simultaneously contact said first dermal area.
27. (new) The method of claim 24, wherein said information comprises a bioelectric conductance value corresponding to said pressure.
28. (new) The method of claim 24, further comprising locating said meridian-first dermal area by:
said user statically contacting successive dermal areas proximate said meridian-first dermal area with said probe;
allowing said probe to dynamically vary a pressure applied by said probe to said successive dermal areas in accordance with said feedback signal; and
determining a dermal location corresponding to said meridian-first dermal area before obtaining said electrical signal corresponding to said meridian-first dermal area.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that the amendments made herein do not add new matter and that the claims are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants request favorable reconsideration. If the Examiner has any questions or concerns regarding this communication, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

DATED this 15 day of January, 2009.

Respectfully submitted,


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